Delaware CEDS

a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the State of Delaware



Delaware CEDS – a program of the Delaware Economic Development Office contact: University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration – 180 Graham Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716 e-mail: bdworsky@udel.edu – phone: 302-831-8710 – fax: 302-831-3488

published September 2005

New Castle Co. WATER QUALITY Facts

I. Summary of Topic's Relationship to Economic Development

Clean, healthy surface water and groundwater is paramount to sustain Delaware's commercial, manufacturing, agriculture, recreation, and tourism industries.

II. Trends and Existing Conditions

Streams in the Christina Basin of northern New Castle County sometimes do not meet Delaware surface-water quality standards for bacteria, sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus, and some metals that could lower the recreational use of these streams. However, these streams do meet drinking-water standards for organic chemicals. Surface-water intakes that draw water from these streams for the City of Wilmington, City of Newark, and United Water Delaware have water-treatment plants that remove pollutants to meet the Delaware drinking-water standards.

Groundwater wells in southern New Castle County sometimes experience exceedances for naturally occurring substances such as iron and manganese and for land-based sources such as nitrogen, and pesticides. The public water-supply wells have water-treatment systems that remove pollutants to meet the Delaware drinking-water standards

III. Projections and Plans

The State of Delaware sponsors two watershed-based programs designed to improve the water quality of the streams and wells in New Castle County. The Christina Basin Clean Water Partnership, a program between Delaware and Pennsylvania, is designed to restore the streams to fishable and swimmable status in accordance with the Total Maximum Daily Load provisions of the Clean Water Act. The Delaware Source Water Protection Program is mandated by the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act and is designed to identify and detect sources of pollution in the watersheds and aquifer that provide a drinking-water supply.

IV. Identified Opportunities and Constraints

Clean drinking-water supplies provide an opportunity for economic growth provided the drinking-water intakes are fitted with water-treatment plants that remove pollutants in accordance with the Delaware drinking-water standards. Implementation of the Christina Basin Clean Water Partnership and the Delaware Source Water Protection Program presents the opportunity to improve water quality in New Castle County watersheds and along streams, such as the Christina River and Brandywine Creek at the Wilmington riverfront renaissance.